Four Desirable
Personality
Traits
Mary Elizabeth O'Gara

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Thesis

FOUR DESIRABLE PERSONALITY TRAITS IN A STUDENT NURSE AND SUGGESTED FORMS FOR THEIR APPRAISAL

Submitted by

Mary Elizabeth O'Gara

(Bridgewater State Teachers College, B.S. in Ed., 1930)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Nursing Education

1947

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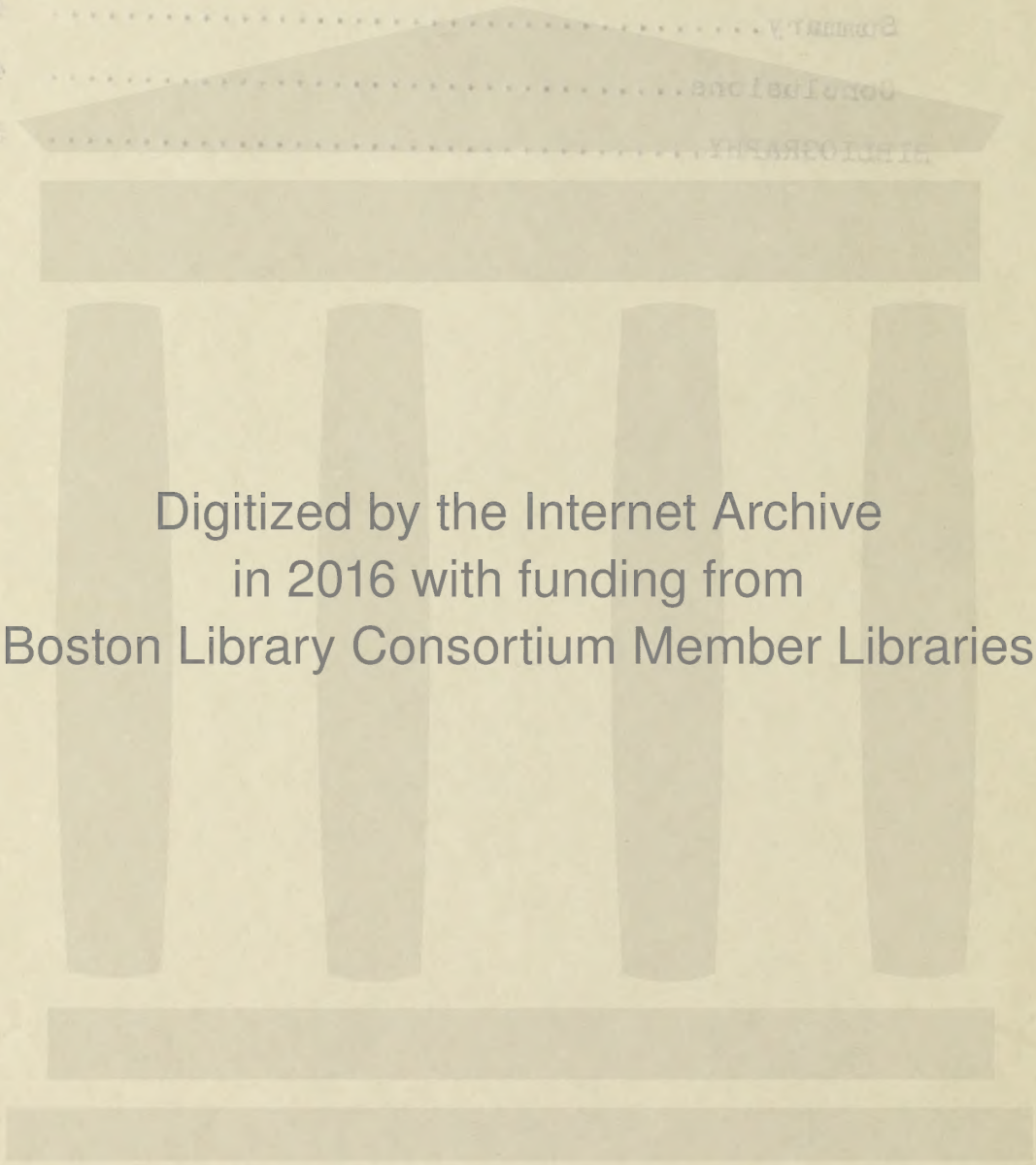

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this study (1) to select four personality traits which are desirable in a student nurse, (2) to discuss several techniques by which an assessment of these traits can be made before the student enters the school of nursing and during the period while she remains in the school, and (3) to suggest forms on which this data can be recorded.

Justification of the Study

For many years, nursing educators have been keenly aware of the importance of desirable personality characteristics in student nurses. It is more and more apparent that the nursing profession is one of the major fields in which personality has been accepted as an important factor in success. In addition to a good educational background, scholastic aptitude, and sound health, it is essential that a candidate for the school of nursing possess a personality that makes for good human relationship.

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It has been reported that about 30 per cent of all the students entering the schools of nursing do not complete their course, and that fully as many fail because of personality adjustment difficulties as from failure in their studies and nursing practice combined.[1]

Recent studies reveal that this problem still exists. In classifying the reasons for student withdrawals, it is noted that "personality and temperament unsuited for nursing" find a prominent place.[2] The data obtained from the use of the "Problem Check List" in a study done by Morison[3] reveal that students are confronted with many problems of personality adjustment.

Gordon, Densford, and Williamson say:

> Experience has indicated that while many nurses admitted to schools in the past have proved eminently well fitted for the profession, others probably ought not to have been accepted. Some as graduates have been unable to give the type of nursing care required of them. Others have been held back by their personality limitations. Others have harmed not the profession but themselves by their attempts to continue in a vocation for which they are not fitted and still others, found inadequate as students, have wasted time and energy, faced disappointment and

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[1] "Round Table on Nursing Tests," Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the National League of Nursing Education (New York: National League of Nursing Education, 1941), p. 197.

[2] National League of Nursing Education, Department of Studies, "Student Withdrawals," American Journal of Nursing (June, 1944), 44:586-587.

[3] Luella J. Morison, "A Problem Check List," American Journal of Nursing (April, 1947), 47:248-251.

> discouragement that could have been avoided if better selection had been made.[1]

Not only is there marked evidence that nursing educators have been conscious of the fact that more attention should be focused on personality traits in the selection of prospective nurses, but findings from studies made by Bernays[2] point out that the American public, the greatest consumer of the product of nursing schools, urges that nurses be chosen with greater regard given to desirable personal characteristics. This task is no easy one as indicated in a statement by Zook:[3]

> The level of nursing education will gradually be lifted as the product of nursing schools is constantly improved. We have no exact scale, no dependable yardstick for measuring or weighing human quality in any form--hence the difficulty of measuring the product of nursing schools.

Appraisal of the candidate's educational background and scholastic aptitude is fairly reliable by the use of standardized tests. Appraisal of health presents no problem because the techniques for this have been well developed in the

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[1]H. Phoebe Gordon, Katherine J. Densford, and E. G. Williamson, Counseling in Schools of Nursing (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947), p. 99.

[2]Edward L. Bernays, "Educators Appraise Nursing," American Journal of Nursing (June, 1946), 46:372-374; "Social Scientists Look at Nursing," American Journal of Nursing (August, 1946), 46:518-520; "America Looks at Nursing," American Journal of Nursing (September, 1946), 46:590-592.

[3]George F. Zook, "Standards and Nursing Education," American Journal of Nursing (August, 1942), 42:929.

medical field. However, despite the attempts in research to refine the techniques of personality measurement, the reliability and accuracy of the means for identifying personality characteristics remain relatively low.

Therefore, it seems important to select some of the personality traits that are desirable in student nurses, to discuss further the techniques that are in use for estimating these less tangible and difficult-to-measure personality traits, and to suggest forms for recording the estimates.

Limitations of the Study

Personality traits. It would not be possible to suggest a list of personality traits which would be satisfactory to all nursing educators. Nor is it intended to maintain that the personality traits defined in this study are the only ones to be desired in student nurses. The selection of traits was made from a review of personality rating scales submitted by forty schools of nursing accredited by the National League of Nursing Education. Four traits which appeared most frequently, and which were different in meaning, were chosen from twenty-eight traits tabulated from these scales. These traits are (1) dependability, (2) co-operation, (3) emotional maturity, and (4) open-mindedness.

Techniques for appraising these traits. The techniques investigated in this study are not the only ones in use for

personality appraisal. They have been limited to the secondary school recommendation, the personal reference form, the personal interview, the rating scale, and the anecdotal record.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

Personality: "There is no single correct definition of personality," Allport says, "usage has sanctioned too many."[1] In this study, personality will be discussed from the point of view that it is "the structure and pattern of the total behavior of the individual."[2]

Personality Trait: A trait is usually regarded as the determining tendency or readiness to response within the individual which gives coherence to his behavior in many situations.[3]

Dependability: "The quality of being depended upon; trustworthiness; reliability."[4]

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[1]Gordon W. Allport, Personality--A Psychological Interpretation (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 25.

[2]Arthur J. Jones, Principles of Guidance (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1945), p. 174.

[3]Allport, op. cit., p. 287 ff.

[4]Webster, New International Dictionary of English Language.

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Co-operation: "The art of working to one end or combining for a certain purpose; joint operation or endeavor; concurrent effort or labor."[1]

Emotional maturity (defined by describing the emotionally mature individual): "The emotionally mature person is one who has an understanding of himself and his world and usually has formulated some explanation of life. He shows independence, self control and direction of his own behavior."[2]

Open-mindedness: "A state of freedom from prejudiced opinion; the state of being amenable to reason; accessibility to new ideas or new tenets; freedom from prejudices; liberality."[3]

Assumptions in This Study

1. Personality is more or less a definite entity made up of generalized traits.
2. Personality traits are characteristic ways of thinking or acting; therefore, can be inferred from behavior.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Fred McKinney, Psychology of Personal Adjustment (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1941), p. 500.

[3] Webster, New International Dictionary of English Language.

3. We infer the presence of a trait if the behavior of an individual fits the definition in the rating device consistently.
4. The present study of a combination of techniques can evolve a system of evaluating the four traits most desirable in a student nurse.
5. Proper interpretation of observations will mark very definite progress toward the refinement of method in the solution of this problem.

Restatement of the Problem

Therefore, with these assumptions in mind, it is the purpose of this study to select and define four personality traits which are important and desirable in a student nurse, to discuss techniques for appraising these traits before a student enters the school of nursing, and during the time she remains in the school, and to suggest forms for recording information obtained from these appraisals.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Only those observations by investigators in this field that have dealt with personality traits and their appraisal in the voluminous literature that has accumulated in the past ten years have been considered pertinent to this study. Prior to 1937 only one work has been reviewed.[1]

One notes general agreement with Symonds[2] that the most obvious evidence of human conduct is purely descriptive. He states that from a single isolated event one is powerless to predict with any assurance what one may expect from an individual in a new situation. Adequacy in sampling is emphasized throughout his book because of the unreliability of single tests, ratings, and other measures. "An adequate rating requires the judgment of several rators in several situations at several different times. Reliable evidence must be multiplied evidence."[3] Stressing observation as a

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[1] Percival N. Symonds, Diagnosing Personality and Conduct (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1931).

[2] Ibid., p. 5.

[3] Ibid.

technique of investigation, certain essentials are paramount. Possession of efficient sense organs, especially vision, alertness and the ability to make reasonably accurate estimates without the use of special instruments together with making an immediate record, free from prejudice, and personal imbalance are primary requisites for the attainment of this end.

Identification of personality traits with the factor of time is fundamental according to Harriman, Greenwood, and Skinner.

> We cannot think of personality as fixed or static. It is always changing as new environmental forces are brought to bear upon inherent potentialities. What it is at present is not disassociated from what it has been or will be. Although personality is undergoing change, an individual does not become an entirely new person in a moment or a year, but his behavior today has developed from that of the past; and the past and the present provide the basis for the emergent personality of tomorrow. Thus we conclude that personality has continuity.[1]

Thorpe[2] recognizes not only the individual possessed of social effectiveness attainable through definite skills in dealing with people, but also the effect that the actions of others have upon him. Considering it from this angle, "personality means the total blend of an individual's traits

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[1]Philip Lawrence Harriman, Lela L. Greenwood, and Charles E. Skinner, Psychology in Nursing Practice (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942), pp. 354-355.

[2]Louis P. Thorpe, "The Nature and Significance of Good Personality," Education (June, 1941), 61:577.

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[2] Louis P. Thorpe, "The Nature and Significance of Good Personality," Education (June, 1941), 61:577.

and the ways of responding to stimuli as observed and evaluated by other people."[1]

Traxler states:

> One obstacle to the measurement of personality is that there is not general agreement on a definition of personality or on the number and nature of the traits of which it is composed. In fact there is a difference of opinion in regard to the existence of personality traits. Most personality tests may be divided into two classes, global and atomistic. In the first class of instruments of appraisal, personality as a whole is studied qualitatively and intensively by means of projective techniques, while in the latter class an attempt is made to analyze personality into its component parts. The majority of recent personality tests have emphasized the atomistic approach, but there are few noteworthy tests of the global type.[2]

One becomes increasingly impressed with the struggle all investigators in this field have encountered in their attempts to clarify the problem and to devise instruments and standards for the appraisal of personality. The convergence of all these efforts toward a tendency to attempt to recognize, measure, and classify personality through traits is attested to by the works of such educators as Morgan,[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Arthur E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), pp. 99-100.

[3] John J. B. Morgan, Psychology (New York: Farrar Rinehart, Inc., 1941), p. 537 ff.

Williamson,[1] Strang,[2] Young,[3] and Jones,[4] and many others.

Characteristic of all writers is their agreement on the complexity of the problem, the difficulty of rationalizing measurement, and that any approach must consider as Bingham says:

> More than the sum of an individual's traits, physical, mental, emotional and intellectual, social and temperamental, passive and active; for "personality" refers also to the way in which all these traits are organized and integrated, the pattern according to which they function together. Personality is what a person is. Aptitudes are then aspects of personality.[5]

A fundamental in personality testing and discerning personality traits is pointed out by Triggs,[6] namely that many tests in use today are not measuring the personality factors that make for success in nursing. "Factors of personality," she says, "cannot be overlooked when considering

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[1]E. G. Williamson, How to Counsel Students (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1939), Ch. III.

[2]Ruth Strang, Counseling Technics in College and Secondary Schools (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937).

[3]Kimball Young, Personality and Problems of Adjustment (New York: F. S. Crofts Company, 1940).

[4]Arthur J. Jones, Principles of Guidance (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1945).

[5]Walter Van Dyke Bingham, Aptitudes and Aptitude Testing (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 21.

[6]Frances O. Triggs, Personnel Work in Schools of Nursing (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1945), pp. 146-147.

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the potentialities of prospective student nurses. Published data do not indicate scores on personality tests are at all closely related to success in nursing."

The kind of test to be decided upon, with particular thought as to the purpose of the test and the use to which the test results will be put, has been noted by McManus,[1] in the selection of candidates with potentialities for nursing. Validity, objectivity, and reliability are qualities necessarily inherent in any test constructed for this purpose.

More specific in the development of a pattern of evaluation, Sherman[2] states that a number of studies reveals the personality of an individual can be effectively studied only in terms of repetition of the same reaction of the individual in adjusting to environment and problems he meets.

In discussing personality analysis for vocational choice, McKinney[3] elucidates at length upon the findings regarding personal traits in vocations. He observes that intelligence is only one test of personality and that tests of special capacities in determining vocational aptitude have grown in

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[1]R. Louise McManus, Study Guide on Evaluation, (New York: National League of Nursing Education, 1944), pp. 5-9.

[2]Mandel Sherman, "The Educators of Personality," Education (May, 1946), 66:556-561.

[3]Fred McKinney, Psychology of Personal Adjustment (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1941), Ch. VIII.

importance despite the dearth of validating data which limits their value. Of equal importance with the investigation of vocational aptitudes is the inquiry into avocational aptitudes. He says: "We hear of clever or fortunate persons capitalizing on some ability that had its origin as an avocation or hobby. These individuals possess native capacities and interests that develop an avocation into a highly successful and profitable vocation."[1]

Stressing the importance of motivation, and distinguishing motivation without capacity as a breeder of maladjustment, the reader's attention becomes focused upon the applicability of his suggestion in devising improved means for the measurement of personality traits in the student nurse.

The most quoted authority in the discussion of personality is Allport. One of his first premises states:

> Personality is so complex a thing that every legitimate method must be employed in its study. Excluded only are those fallacious ways that science has long since learned to avoid: heresay, prejudice of observation, impressive coincidence, the overweighted single instance, question-begging inductions and deductions, and the like. Such methods are used by charlatan characterologies as well as in uncritical everyday discourse. They lead nowhere. But apart from these there are a great many legitimate methods of studying personality, each with a place in the armamentarium of the psychologist.
>
> The basic method in psychology is the same as that employed by common sense, viz., observation of

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[1] Ibid., pp. 218-219.

> a datum coupled with the interpretation of its significance.[1]

The influence of Allport's thinking upon subsequent writers on personality and its related aspects has been marked. This was inevitable because of the precision with which he explored every subdivision of the subject of personality from the approach, development and definition of the structure of personality, to the analysis and understanding of personality. His quotation of Stern on what a trait is, forms his basis for eliciting the finer distinguishing features of a trait, which is so often confused and used as synonymous with attitude:

> We have the right and the obligation to develop a concept of trait as a definitive doctrine; for in all the activity of the person there is besides a variable portion, likewise a constant purpose of portion, and this latter we isolate in the concept of trait.[2]

In further elaboration, Allport[3] points out that the ever-changing nature of traits and their close dependence upon the fluid conditions of the environment forbid a conception that is over-rigid and over-simple. He continues:

> Traits then are discovered not by deductive reasoning, and not by naming, and are themselves never directly observed. They are discovered in the individual life--the only place where they can be discovered--only through an inference (or interpretation) made necessary by the demonstrable consistency of the separate observable acts of behavior.[4]

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[1] Allport, op. cit., p. 369.

[2] Ibid., p. 286.

[3] Ibid., p. 312.

[4] Ibid., p. 314.

Traits, therefore, are not creations in the mind of the observer, nor are they verbal fictions. Neither are they directly observable, but are inferred in the manner that any determining tendency is inferred. No such inference could be possible, unless repeated occurrence of actions having the same significance is observed. Only on this basis can the stability and consistency of personal behavior be explained.

The following few citations from the most recently published works of investigators of this problem provide more than ample background to the question: What can we accept about personality?

First, personality is inherently dynamic. This force lies not in the stimulus that determines behavior but the trait itself. It is apparent that a trait once formed carries the capacity for directing channelized responses.

Second, personality is more than accumulated experience. It is a biologic synthesis from which emerge new functions identified as personality traits.

Third, personality is affected by experience. Its dynamic character leads to relations with other features of the universe which cause it to change and develop.

Fourth, personality has inherent unity. Reflexes and conditioned responses are partial descriptions of an individual in action but they are not independent units. The personality may be split by disease, injury or emotional

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Fourth, personality has inherent unity. Reflexes and conditioned responses are partial descriptions of an individual in action but they are not independent units. The personality may be split by disease, injury or emotional

shock. The process of integration, therefore, is one of therapy only.

Fifth, personality traits are ways of thinking or acting. They cannot be defined or measured independently of the total personality or situation in which thinking or acting occurs.

Sixth, the existence of a trait has been established empirically and statistically. The latter techniques are better suited to the measure of intellective than to connotative functions.

Seventh, personality qualities within certain limits are consistent and relatively permanent in all normal individuals.

Eighth, personality study must be kept free from emotional bias.

Ninth, personality to be understood requires both intuition and inference to complete a pattern of mental integration from which an interpretation differing from that of the "man in the street" can be conceived.

Tenth, personality denotes a concept that is universally acknowledged to be something alive, personal in nature, resistive to total exploitation, but capable of partial or relative evaluation.

Relationship and significance to nursing. Relative, therefore, to the problem of the importance of personality traits in the selection of student nurses and their further development while in the nursing school, it is manifest that the task is not only intimately associated with, but actually inseparable from, the following aspects of an efficiently combined method of assessment.

It is the obligation of every good school of nursing to select from among those who apply for admission those individuals who most nearly possess all the qualities which will lead to success in the school as well as in the profession. At the present time, research has provided evidence regarding the relationship of scholastic aptitude, as demonstrated by previous academic achievement in high school or college as well as by achievement in standardized tests procedures, with success in the school of nursing. However, the selection of personal qualities which are associated with success in nursing poses a much more difficult problem, since the methods of identifying such characteristics are much less accurate. It is apparent from the literature on nursing education that, at the present time, schools can select more efficiently on the basis of intelligence and past achievement records than with respect to personality traits. In no way does this lessen the importance of personality, but indicates

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CHAPTER III

SELECTION OF TRAITS FOR THIS STUDY

Technique. Letters were sent to fifty-four League-accredited schools selected at random but embodying a wide geographical distribution. This number represents approximately 50 per cent of the schools accredited by the National League of Nursing Education. These letters requested a rating scale for personality traits with the stipulation that identity of neither the school or form would be made in this study.

Summary of responses. This is indicated in Graphs 1 to 4 and Tables 1 and 2.

Analysis of rating scales. The following factors were considered in this analysis:

1. Form: This varied from a card 4" x 6" to four pages. The most common type was a single page 8½" x 11".
2. Content: From two to twenty-eight personality traits were measured. In addition, items exclusive of personality traits were included in all these scales. Uniformity of instruction for interpretation of rating scales was notably absent. Among twenty

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Uniformity of instruction for interpretation of rating scales was notably absent. Among twenty

schools using individual forms, only four suggested that ratings be based on anecdotal records.

3. Rating: This varied from markings by letters (A-B-C-D), numbers (1-2-3-4), and terms expressing gradations from superior to unsatisfactory, as well as extreme opposites, e.g., co-operative to unco-operative.

Criteria for selection. Selection of the four personality traits designated in this study, namely, dependability, co-operation, emotional maturity, and open-mindedness, was based upon the following criteria:

1. Frequency as indicated in rating scales of forty schools.
2. Widespread quest (geographical distribution).
3. Definition avoiding overlapping.
4. Observability of these traits as reflected in behavior.
5. The writer's conviction that these four traits more nearly describe the personality pattern from which all adjustments to the profession of nursing can be tailored.

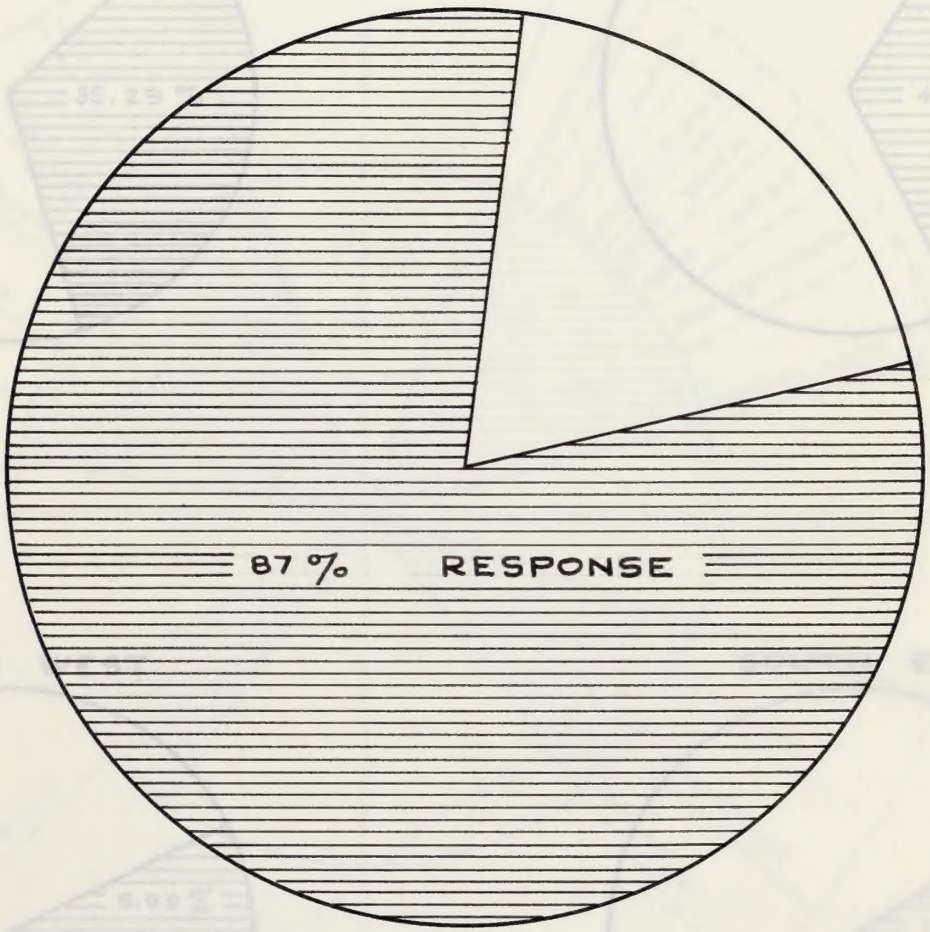
schools using individual forms, only four suggested that ratings be based on anecdotal records.

3. Rating: This varied from markings by letters (A-B-C-D), numbers (1-2-3-4), and terms expressing gradations from superior to unsatisfactory, as well as extreme opposites, e.g., co-operative to uno-operative.

Criteria for selection. Selection of the four personality traits designated in this study, namely, dependability, co-operation, emotional maturity, and open-mindedness, was based upon the following criteria:

1. Frequency as indicated in rating scales of forty schools.
2. Widespread quest (geographical distribution).
3. Definition avoiding overlapping.
4. Observability of these traits as reflected in behavior.
5. The writer's conviction that these four traits more nearly describe the personality pattern from which all adjustments to the profession of nursing can be tailored.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

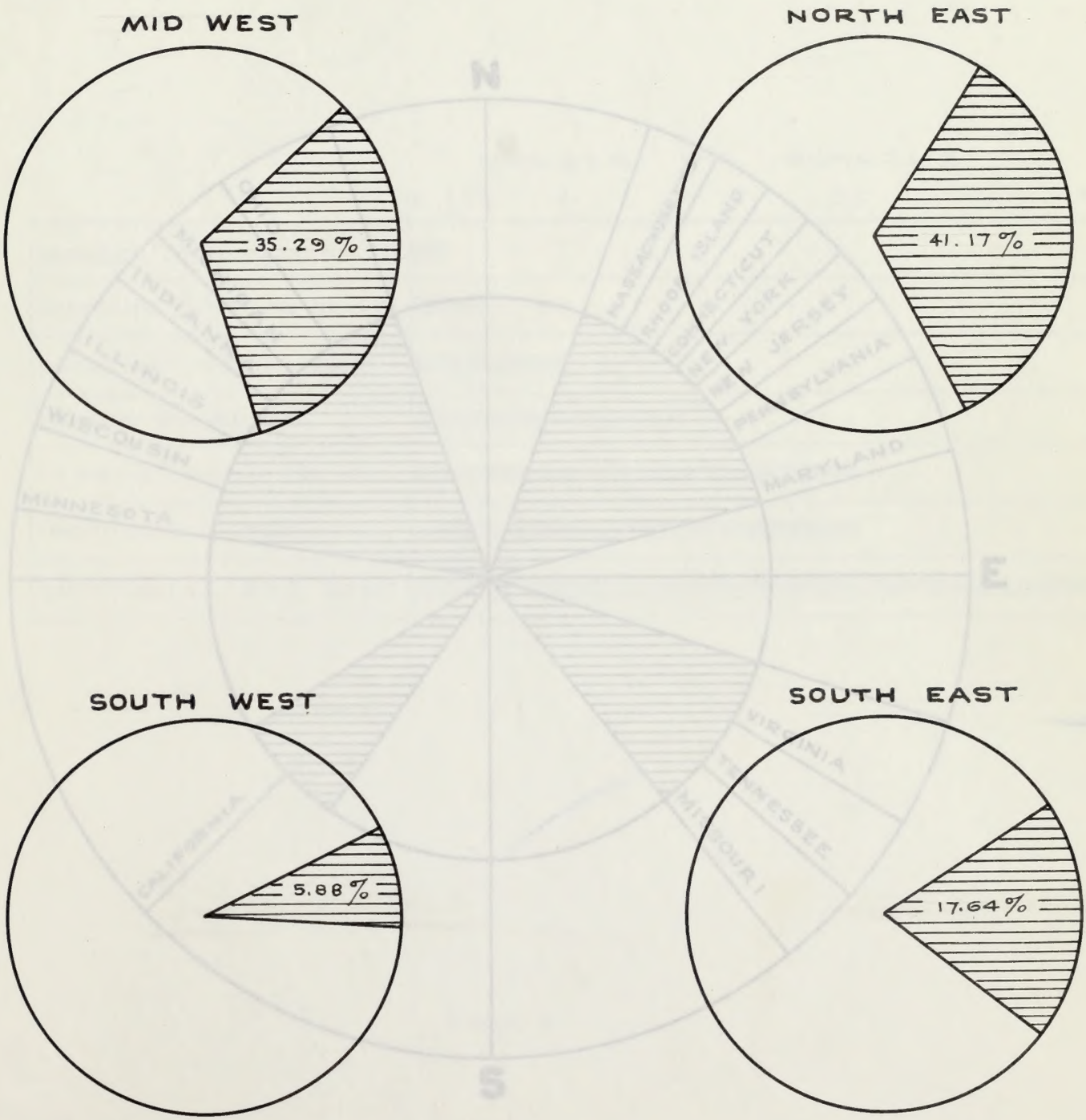


Graph 1

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Graph 1

Sectional Response in Percentage

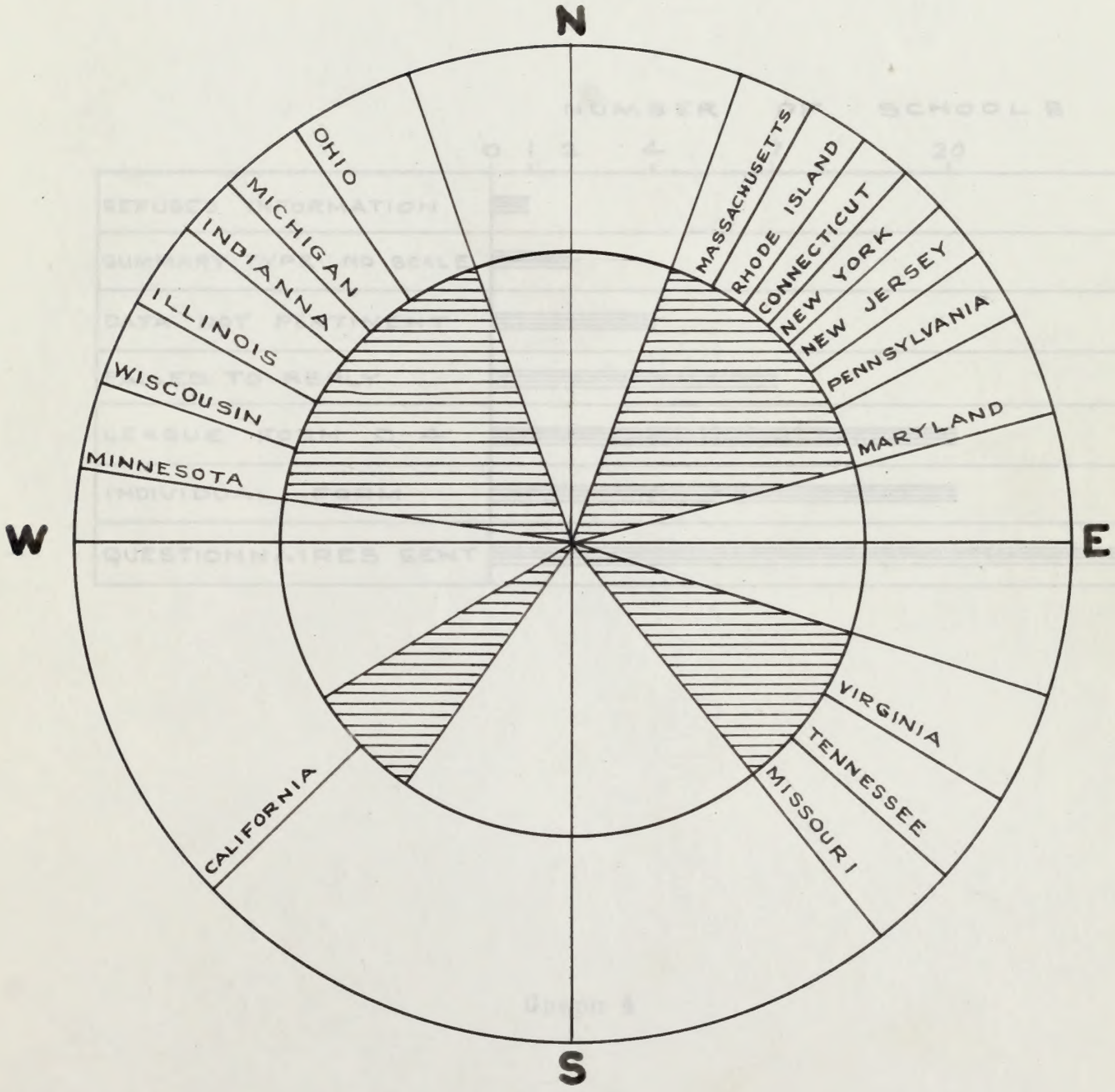


Graph 2

SECTIONAL RESPONSE IN PERCENTAGE

Graph 2

Sectional and Geographical Distribution

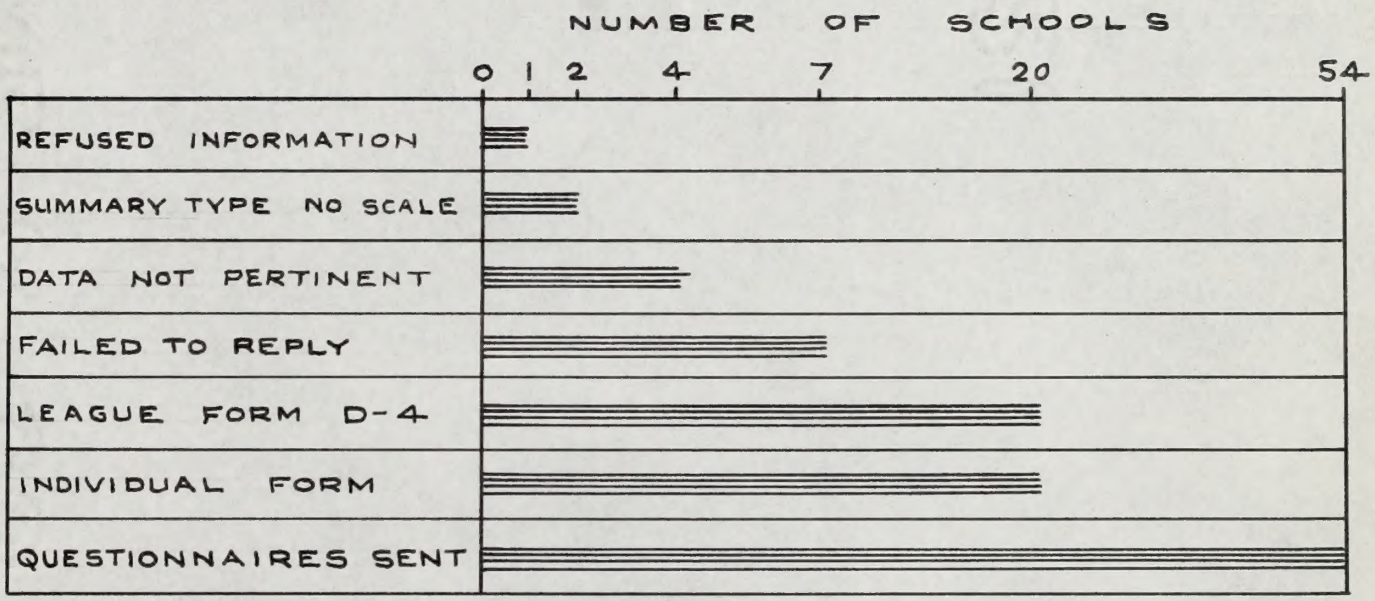


Graph 3

SECTIONAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Graph 3

Analysis of Response



Graph 4

QUESTIONNAIRES SENT
INDIVIDUAL FORM
LEAGUE FORM D-4
FAILED TO REPLY
DATA NOT PERTINENT
SUMMARY TYPE NO SCALE
REFUSED INFORMATION
0 1 2 4 7 20
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

Graph 4

Table 1. Personality Traits Listed on Rating Scales from Forty Schools.

Trait Name	Frequency of mention	Rank
Dependability	33	1
Adaptability	33	1
Cooperation	32	2
Responsibility	31	3
Tact	30	4
Stability	29	5
Self-control	28	6
Open-mindedness	28	6
Pleasing manner	27	7
Confidence	26	8
Poise	26	8
Sincerity	26	8
Loyalty	25	9
Emotional independence	25	9
Conscientiousness	24	10
Sensitivity to reaction of others	24	10
Thoroughness	23	11
Punctuality	23	11
Sense of values	22	12
Broad interests	21	13
Initiative	6	14
Enthusiasm	4	15
Tolerance	4	15
Sense of humor	4	15
Creative ability	2	16
Imagination	2	16
Objectivity	1	17
Vitality	1	17

Several traits appearing in forty rating scales emphasized their importance by frequency. A close scrutiny of this table will show that all of these traits fall into one of the major divisions of traits designated in this study.

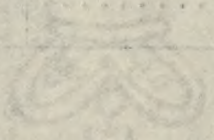


Table 2. Comparison of Forms Showing Personality Traits Listed on Rating Scales from Forty Schools.

Personality Traits	Schools Using League Form	Schools Using Their Own Form — Schools Number 1 to 20																				Number in Agreement
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
*Emotionally mature																						
Well poised	20			x	x			x	x			x					x					26
Self-control	20	x		x				x	x			x				x	x	x				28
Sensitive to reaction of others	20	x							x			x			x							24
Inspires confidence	20	x		x					x		x	x				x						26
Emotionally independent	20			x		x		x				x					x					25
Stable-well balanced	20	x					x	x						x	x		x	x	x		x	29
Sincere	20	x		x				x			x				x	x						26
Open-minded (receptive to criticism)	20		x	x			x			x			x		x	x		x				28
*Personally reliable																						
Dependable	20	x		x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	33
Thorough	20	x		x								x										23
Conscientious	20	x			x		x					x										24
Punctual	20				x							x									x	23
Assumes responsibilities for own conduct, work and learning	20	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x							31
*Socially competent																						
Adjusts well to patients and co-workers	20	x	x		x	x	x		x				x	x	x	x	x			x	x	33
Tactful	20	x		x	x			x	x			x		x	x	x	x					30
Loyal	20			x	x		x					x				x						25
Co-operative	20	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x					32
Pleasing manner and appearance	20	x	x			x		x				x		x		x						27
Broad interests	20			x																		21
Good sense of esthetic values	20							x			x											22
Initiative		x			x					x		x	x								x	6
Creative ability															x				x			2
Imagination				x	x																	2
Sense of humor				x	x						x										x	4
Objectivity			x																			1
Enthusiasm				x				x			x	x										4
Vitality																	x					1
Tolerant		x		x								x			x							4
Total		15	4	17	11	5	7	11	9	4	8	17	4	7	10	10	8	3	2	2	6	

Table 2. Comparison of Terms Showing Personality Traits Listed on Voting Blanks from Forty Schools.

Personality Traits	Schools Voting Legume Term	Schools Voting Their Own Term — School Number 1 to 20																				Number of Terms
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Emotionally mature																						
Well poised	20				x			x			x	x			x							28
Self-control	20			x	x	x			x			x	x			x						28
Sensitive to reaction of others	20							x			x											25
Inspires confidence	20					x			x	x		x				x						28
Emotionally independent	20				x			x			x		x		x							28
Stable-well balanced	20			x		x	x					x	x				x					28
Sincere	20			x			x			x		x										28
Open-minded (receptive to criticism)	20				x		x	x		x			x		x							28
Personally reliable																						
Dependable	20	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x					x	33
Thorough	20								x						x							23
Considerate	20								x			x		x								24
Punctual	20	x							x						x							23
Assumes responsibilities for own conduct, work and learning	20					x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x						31
Socially competent																						
Adjusts well to patrons and co-workers	20	x	x			x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x		x	x			33
Truthful	20				x	x	x	x		x				x	x							30
Loyal	20					x			x				x		x	x						26
Co-operative	20				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						32
Pleasing manner and appearance	20					x		x		x		x				x	x					27
Broad interests	20												x									21
Good sense of ethic values	20								x		x											22
Initiative				x			x	x		x			x									6
Creative ability					x																	2
Imagination													x									2
Sense of humor									x				x									4
Objectivity														x								1
Patriotism										x	x		x									4
Vitality																						1
Tolerant																						0
Total																						

Table 2 shows comparison of the League form with individual forms of rating scales submitted from twenty schools. Before any comparison could be made, it was necessary to list the descriptive terms embodied in each form. It is to be noted that five schools listed as many as 17 traits and not less than 11; eight schools not more than 10 traits and not less than 6; seven schools not more than 5 and as few as 2 traits. Symonds[1] has stated that the rating of three to five items insures as much accuracy probably as any greater number.

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[1]Symonds, op. cit., p. 83.

[1]Symonds, op. cit., p. 83.

CHAPTER IV

TECHNIQUES FOR APPRAISING PERSONALITY TRAITS

It is commonly accepted that lack of agreement on the definition offers the greatest obstacle in the measurement of personality. This has by no means discouraged experimenters from devising ways of studying the individual. Many techniques for estimating personality are mentioned in the literature. These include questionnaires, interviews, rating scales, anecdotal behavior descriptions, and objective tests.

Each makes a unique contribution to the study of the individual, one supplementing the other. The questionnaire, such as used for secondary school recommendation and personal reference, evokes only facts or opinions which a person chooses to write under given conditions. The interview supplies information which a person is willing to give in face to face relationship. Rating scales show how the individual impresses other people. Anecdotal behavior descriptions provide a cumulative record of evidence relating to the habits, ideas, and personality of individuals as manifested by behavior. Personality tests reveal information which the individual gives about himself.

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Personality tests. Personality tests, their value and limitations, is a study in itself, and without doubt, a field wide open for research in nursing education. In this study, the subject of personality tests will be briefly presented to demonstrate the need for utilizing the other available techniques to make personality assessment more reliable and significant in the selection and guidance of student nurses.

The number of personality tests in existence to date is multiple. According to Traxler,[1] it is safe to estimate that the number of published tests and inventories loosely classified under the heading of personality is 500. This presents an immediate problem as to the choice of ones best suited to the needs of the nursing school. In discussing the use of personality tests, Bernreuter[2] states that personality tests as they are now devised, are of little use in the selection program, but does concede that they can be useful in a guidance program.

While personality tests tend to be as reliable as many of the widely used intelligence and achievement tests, most of them are not reliable enough for satisfactory use in the analysis of the individual. Jones, on the basis of present

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[1] Arthur E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 99.

[2] R. G. Bernreuter, "The Present Status of Personality Trait Tests," Educational Record, American Council on Education (January, 1940), 21:166.

investigations, concludes that:

> ....the self report of subject-answering type of personality instrument does not have the value claimed by many of its advocates; that it does not give an adequate picture of the personality traits of the individual; that it is likely to present a onesided view of the individual; that it is unsafe in the hands of an untrained individual as an instrument of determining personality; that it is useful, if interpreted intelligently, as one of the several methods by which we secure responses from individuals.[1]

In summation, Gordon, Densford, and Williamson say:

> Up to the present we do not have enough evidence that there is available a personality test which will screen out applicants who actually prove themselves good nurses and apparently suited to their work.[2]

Questionnaires. Two distinct forms of questionnaire have been utilized to seek information about the individual, the one sent to educational institutions attended prior to admission to the school of nursing, and the other sent to individuals whose names have been submitted as references by the candidate seeking admission.

Both of these have advantages and disadvantages. In the first instance, the information received on the form from an educational institution carries the decided advantage of projecting an estimate based not only upon objective evidence elicited by proper questions, but also of portraying

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[1]Jones, op. cit., p. 188.

[2]H. Phoebe Gordon, Katherine J. Densford, and E. G. Williamson, Counseling in Schools of Nursing (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947), p. 113.

investigations, concludes that:

> ....the self report of subject-answering type of personality instrument does not have the value claimed by many of its advocates; that it does not give an adequate picture of the personality traits of the individual; that it is likely to present a one-sided view of the individual; that it is unsafe in the hands of an untrained individual as an instrument of determining personality; that it is useful, if interpreted intelligently, as one of the several methods by which we secure responses from individuals.[1]

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[1]James, op. cit., p. 188.

[2]H. Phoebe Gordon, Katherine I. Benford, and E. G. Williamson, Guessing in Schools of Nursing (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947), p. 178.

a more comprehensive picture gleaned from cumulative records made over a period of school terms. The so-called personal reference form is self limited in the adequacy of data revealed because the applicant usually seeks a person whose opinion will be biased on the favorable side. This, coupled with the fact that those submitting such references are too often inexperienced in the mode of appraisal, defeats the objective for which the information is sought. The detriment to the candidate and the school by failure to provide an accurate estimate could frequently cause selection of one totally unsuited to nursing.

Lessening the probability of error inherent in both these forms without sacrificing the already existing values in each, can be accomplished by refining the techniques for securing data about the individual. A form that will be exclusive enough to eliminate bias, and inclusive enough to elicit responses that will not exceed the proper limits of validity, is proposed. This should lend itself readily to reliability, measurability, and interpretation.

With these qualifications for assessment, an approach to standardization of a technique appears possible. As delineated in Chapter III, page 20, the traits selected to form the basis of the proposed technique are definable, observable, distinct, and amenable to simple description. They further fulfil the qualification that the definition

of a trait, which as stated by Long,[1] suggests a similar impression to each person and which gives the same impression each time it is stated. Simplicity in detail and form has been a further guide in this development, because the reliability of ratings is enhanced when traits are broken down into simple factors. Endeavors to maintain this simplicity have not lost sight of the fact that people vary in their ability to evaluate others.

The greatest source of error in this variation lies in their natural inclinations to set up individual standards. Thus, it is to be presumed that people to whom this form is directed will be persons whose very positions lend reasonable justification for utilizing their knowledge, and that the limitations imposed upon their answers will render the interpretation of the data less confused than at present.

---

[1]M. Constance Long, "Appraising of the Student's Growth in Skill and Development of Professionally Desirable Personality Traits," Forty-Ninth Annual Report, National League of Nursing Education, 1943, p. 187.

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[1] M. Constance Long, "Appraising of the Student's Growth in Skill and Development of Professionally Desirable Personality Traits," Forty-Ninth Annual Report, National League of Nursing Education, 1933, p. 137.

SAMPLE

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

SCHOOL OF NURSING . . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . . .

NAME OF APPLICANT . . . . . .

The school of nursing seeks your estimate of four personality traits which have been deemed most essential in evaluating a candidate's acceptability for the profession of nursing. The value of your response will be dependent upon your frankness and objectivity. It is highly desirable that you include illustrations of typical behavior under each trait. Your co-operation in following these suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

1. Dependability. Does this applicant possess this trait as reflected in her honesty? Is she reliable with herself and trustworthy with others? Does she assume responsibility for her own actions and also for group actions? Is her initiative maximum or minimum, and her industry eager or reluctant, worthy or unworthy? Does perseverance reflect task completion in spite of obstacles? Is she consistent?

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

2. Co-operation. Is this trait exemplified in the proper adaptation to group activity? Is she willing to assist and to be assisted? Does she manifest subservience of her own desires for the general good? Is the object of her co-operation always directed toward a good end?

3. Emotional maturity. Is this trait exhibited by characteristics of applicant's own age group, by proper display of independence, by self control under environmental stress and criticism? How does she react under tension?

4. Open-mindedness. Is this trait reflected in her discriminatory power? Can she suspend judgment on a new idea until all available evidence is obtained? Can she select the good and reject the bad? Can she distinguish between constructive and destructive criticism both when criticized and when offering criticism? Does she respect opposing viewpoints, ideas, and ideologies as well as show flexibility in respect for the point of view of others? Does she manifest receptivity to new ideas that may modify existing beliefs and lead to new purposes?

5. Additional comments.

6. How long have you known applicant?

Signature . . . . . .

Position. . . . . .

Date. . . . . .

SAMPLE

PERSONAL REFERENCE FORM

SCHOOL OF NURSING . . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . . .

NAME OF APPLICANT . . . . . .

The school of nursing seeks your estimate of four personality traits which have been deemed most essential in evaluating a candidate's acceptability for the profession of nursing. The value of your response will be dependent upon your frankness and objectivity. It is highly desirable that you include illustrations of typical behavior under each trait. Your cooperation in following these suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

1. Dependability. Does the applicant possess this trait as reflected in her honesty? Is she reliable with herself and trustworthy with others? Does she assume responsibility for her own actions and also for group actions? Is her initiative maximum or minimum, and her industry eager or reluctant, worthy or unworthy? Does perseverance reflect task completion in spite of obstacles? Is she consistent?

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

2. Co-operation. Is this trait exemplified in the proper adaptation to group activity? Is she willing to assist and to be assisted? Does she manifest subservience of her own desires for the general good? Is the object of her co-operation always directed toward a good end?

3. Emotional maturity. Is this trait exhibited by characteristics of applicant's own age group, by proper display of independence, by self control under environmental stress and criticism? How does she react under tension?

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5. Additional comments.

6. How long have you known applicant?

Signature . . . . . .

Position. . . . . .

Date. . . . . .

The Personal Interview. The interview which has been described as a "conversation with a purpose,"[1] while an age-old method, is still very satisfactory for securing information from an individual that is personal in nature. Bingham further qualifies this by saying, "It is a serious conversation directed to a definite purpose other than satisfaction in the conversation itself."[2]

Because of spontaneity, flexibility, and variability, the interview does not lend itself easily to scientific investigation. It does provide a face-to-face opportunity for confirming or revising judgment based upon the relationship revealed by other factors such as tests, questionnaires, and records. It gives the interviewer an opportunity to observe the applicant in relationship to the environment in which she seeks a place, as well as providing the interviewee a chance to express herself. Both of these aspects should be considered with the sole objective in mind of further measuring the four personality traits sought.

The dominant quality in the art of interviewing is skill which is more often acquired than naturally possessed. Every method designed to conduct a good interview should utilize the many suggestions that experience in this field has pointed

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[1]Walter Van Dyke Bingham and Bruce Victor Moore, How to Interview (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), p. 15.

[2]Ibid.

out such as preparation, proper setting, pursuing the interviewee's point of view, tactful control, and a sufficient period of time without interruption.

Highly significant is Allport's comment upon the interview. He says:

> A good interview requires variation, and only with difficulty can it be reduced to rules and formulae. Although interviewing is an art, it clearly involves the same three factors as do all judgment-situations. There is first, the skill of the interviewer, secondly, the openness or enigmatic quality of the subject, and thirdly, the selection and framing of questions that will reveal significant and trustworthy information concerning the subject.[1]

It cannot be too emphatically stressed, therefore, that with the possibility of approaching standardization of a technique for assessing the personality traits set forth as most desirable in a prospective candidate for the profession of nursing, the details of the technical aspect of the interview must pursue the same line of questioning as suggested in the forms devised for the questionnaires. One cannot escape the conviction that the paramount aim of this method should be achieved by eliciting responses to the suggested questions which will detail actual experiences whether they be in the home, school, church, or social sphere. Pursuit of this theme of interrogation will give supportive evidence for the existence of these traits.

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[1]Gordon W. Allport, Personality--A Psychological Interpretation (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 509.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW FORM

School of Nursing . . . . . .

Name of Applicant . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

(See Guide for Personal Interview Form)

1. DEPENDABILITY

2. CO-OPERATION

3. EMOTIONAL MATURITY

4. OPEN-MINDEDNESS

5. SPECIAL NOTES

Interviewed by . . . . . .

Date . . . . . .

PERSONAL INTERVIEW FORM

School of Nursing . . . . . .

Name of Applicant . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

(See Guide for Personal Interview Form)

1. DEPENDABILITY

2. CO-OPERATION

3. EMOTIONAL MATURITY

4. OPEN-MINDEDNESS

5. SPECIAL NOTES

Interviewed by . . . . . .

Date . . . . . .

Guide for Personal Interview Form

Suggested Key Questions for obtaining information that can be compared with other data which has already been received. Emphasis should be placed on the accuracy of the recorded statements. Distinguish between real facts, impressions, and interpretations. If possible, encourage applicant to cite examples of experience which objectify.

1. Dependability. Does this applicant possess this trait as reflected in her honesty? Is she reliable with herself and trustworthy with others? Does she assume responsibility for her own actions and also for group actions? Is her initiative maximum or minimum, and her industry eager or reluctant, worthy or unworthy? Does perseverance reflect task completion in spite of obstacles? Is she consistent?

2. Co-operation. Is this trait exemplified in the proper adaptation to group activity? Is she willing to assist and to be assisted? Does she manifest subservience of her own desires for the general good?

3. Emotional maturity. Is this trait exhibited by characteristics of applicant's own age group, by proper display of independence, by self control under environmental stress and criticism? How does she react under tension?

4. Open-mindedness. Is this trait reflected in her discriminatory power? Can she suspend judgment on a new idea until all available evidence is obtained? Can she select the good and reject the bad? Can she distinguish between constructive and destructive criticism both when criticized and when offering criticism? Does she respect opposing viewpoints, ideas, and ideologies as well as show flexibility in respect for the point of view of others? Does she manifest receptivity to new ideas that may modify existing beliefs and lead to new purposes?

Rating scale. The importance of studying personal characteristics of each applicant is by no means limited to the selection program. It is not likely that every student admitted to the school of nursing will possess all of the desirable personality traits or possess each trait to the same degree. However, it is expected that the students selected will have aptitudes for developing desirable characteristics to their fullest. The aptitudes do not lend themselves to precise measurement, but must be assessed mainly by the judgment of others.

One of the most universally employed techniques for estimating personal qualities is rating. Rating is described by Allport as a "formal and articulate estimate of the strength of one or more qualities in a personality made upon the basis of direct acquaintance with the personality."[1]

Rating is, perhaps, the easiest to use of all the tools for personality analysis, yet, in the hands of inexperienced persons it is not without danger. Jones[2] points out that harm can be done by labeling a trait "good" or "bad." He further elaborates by saying:

> Few, if any, traits are always harmful or always useful; they are harmful in certain situations and useful in others. Emphasis should be placed upon the situation or circumstances in which the

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[1]Allport, op. cit., p. 437.

[2]Arthur J. Jones, Principles of Guidance (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1944, Third edition), p. 190.

> behavior is observed and upon finding what the behavior is, not on labeling it either good or bad.[1]

No one rating scale will fit every school situation. The progress of a student's development should be measured in terms of the stated objectives of the school.

Literature about the status of rating has been reviewed to suggest improvements in the quality as well as the reliability of the rating method.

A form, not a rating scale, is suggested for compiling supplementary data on the development of the four personality traits from which ratings can be made. The adaptability of this form will be apparent in the detailed reports of head nurses, supervisors, instructors, and other guidance personnel. Observations from all these sources become available for final evaluation by a specially qualified group. Data thus obtained and interpreted by experts create a situation which will be most effective. In addition, it will lessen the degree of error in present methods of personality analysis and description.

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[1] Loc. cit.

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[1] Loc. cit.

SUPPLEMENTARY FORM FOR APPRAISING PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

School of Nursing . . . . . Assignment . . .

Name. . . . . Class. . . . . .

Personality traits to be appraised.

1. DEPENDABILITY. Does she possess this trait as reflected in her honesty? Is she reliable with herself and trustworthy with others? Does she assume responsibility for her own actions and also for group actions? Is her initiative maximum or minimum, and her industry eager or reluctant, worthy or unworthy? Does perseverance reflect task completion in spite of obstacles? Is she consistent?

Descriptions of typical behavior from anecdotal recordings:

2. CO-OPERATION. Is this trait exemplified in the proper adaptation to group activity? Is she willing to assist and to be assisted? Does she manifest subservience of her own desires for the general good?

Descriptions of typical behavior from anecdotal recordings:

SUPPLEMENTARY FORM FOR APPRAISING PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

School of Nursing . . . . . Assignment . . .

Name . . . . . Class. . . . . .

Personality traits to be appraised.

1. DEPENDABILITY. Does she possess this trait as reflected in her honesty? Is she reliable with her-self and trustworthy with others? Does she assume responsibility for her own actions and also for group actions? Is her initia-tive maximum or minimum, and her industry eager or reluctant, worthy or unworthy? Does perseverance reflect task completion in spite of obstacles? Is she consistent?

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Descriptions of typical behavior from anecdotal records:

3. EMOTIONAL MATURITY. Is this trait exhibited by characteristics of her own age group, by proper display of independence, by self control under environmental stress and criticism? How does she react under tension?

Descriptions of typical behavior from anecdotal recordings:

4. OPEN-MINDEDNESS. Is this trait reflected in her discriminatory power? Can she suspend judgment on a new idea until all available evidence is obtained? Can she select the good and reject the bad? Can she distinguish between constructive and destructive criticism both when criticized and when offering criticism? Does she respect opposing viewpoints, ideas, and ideologies as well as show flexibility for the point of view of others? Does she manifest receptivity to new ideas that may modify existing belief and lead to new purposes?

Descriptions of typical behavior from anecodtal recordings:

Signature . . . . . .

Position. . . . . .

Date of Conference:

Comments:

_____

Signature of student

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Anecdotal record. A critical device designed to yield data descriptive of personality is called the anecdotal record. An anecdotal record is a running cumulative description of actual instances of behavior from which personality patterns may be interpreted.

The essential elements of an anecdotal record are objectivity, consistency, and brevity. Of prime importance is the recording in the anecdote only that behavior which is actually observed with a statement of the circumstances which surrounded it.

Four types of anecdotes are commonly described in the literature:[1]

1. An objective statement of behavior supplemented by a personal interpretation of that behavior in view of the situation in which it occurred.
2. An objective statement of behavior with interpretation and record of treatment.
3. An objective statement of behavior with interpretation and suggestions for further treatment by counselors and others with the approval of the counselor.
4. An objective statement of behavior without interpretation or suggested treatment.

The fourth type, as a result of this study, pre-eminently recommends itself. The reason for this unqualified recommendation lies in the fact that interpretation of this accumulated

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objective information should be reserved solely to a specially trained and experienced group.

The anecdotal record is not without limitation. Its first value depends upon the skill of the observer. Its second and greater value must always be deferred to the art and ingenuity of interpretation. The universal objection in actual practice has been the time consumed in making such records. This can be relieved by minimizing the amount of other record keeping, and by placing any and all facilities, especially secretarial service, at the disposal of the personnel whose duty it is to supply this effective means of measuring the progress and development of personality traits.

In summary, this technique should respect simplicity, accuracy, and restraint from the influence of subjectivity.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. Birth endows every person with individually characteristic potentialities for personality development. These tend to find expression in traits as the person matures and the structure of the personality takes form. The development of various traits is influenced by environmental factors to a greater or lesser degree. The environment with which a person is constantly in contact and in which the personality is aging exerts two kinds of force which bear upon the person, namely, impersonal physical factors, and personal cultural factors. Mindful therefore that characteristics of personality cover all levels and remembering especially that the uniqueness of personality is paramount, that is, personality is individual and not generic, it can be stated summarily that scrutinizing the activity of a person constitutes the essence of personality study. This overt act, objectively manifested to and observed by others, when reduced to the definitions and recorded within the suggested limitations of this study, becomes the fundamental criterion from which evolves the comprehensive range of major objectives as set forth in the preceding chapters.

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The degree of error inherent in subjective appraisal of objective evidence has been lessened by an attempt to minimize confusion. This has been accomplished by a more precise definition of terms and evaluation techniques.

Conclusions. The development of a form by which four most desirable personality traits in a student nurse are sought, recognized, and measured, is the major outcome of this study. Recording significant behavior patterns from which the development of the traits of dependability, co-operation, open-mindedness, and emotional maturity can be measured, is also stressed.

Personality traits can be more reliably assessed by the suggested techniques.

Full knowledge of four traits in an individual is more easy of attainment and of far greater value than a sketchy outline of twenty traits.

Efforts directed toward the refinement of methods of appraisal stand out among the conclusions of this study.

Simplicity and uniformity of records should be employed in analyzing behavior to bring about some measure of order to the chaos existing from the multiplicity of records now in use.

Personnel should be trained in the skill of observation and recording, since the effectiveness of the techniques suggested is dependent upon the accuracy and reliability of

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Personnel should be trained in the skill of observation and recording, since the effectiveness of the techniques suggested is dependent upon the accuracy and reliability of

the observer. Development of this skill is possible through an in-service training program for all who are concerned with keeping these records.

Objectivity of techniques is of primary significance.

The reservation of the interpretation of collected data to persons eminently qualified by training and experience is of equal importance.

Cumulative data from several sources should be assembled for critical analysis and evaluation in an effort to point out further projection of this study designed to achieve additional refinements.

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